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FORMER VENICE SCHOOL Madison County, Illinois

INTRODUCTION

Based on the human health threat from exposure posed by the dilapidated, asbestos-containing school located at 700 Broadway in Venice, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) will abate the asbestos where safe to do so, and recycle the remaining building material using State funds. Due to the condition of this former school, it is highly likely that asbestos fibers are being released to the environment and coming in contact with trespassers or nearby residents. Health concerns for human exposure warrants corrective action at this location.

SITE HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The site consists of the original Venice High School built in 1910, the Venice Elementary School built in 1920 and several later additions built in the 1950s. These once functional schools have become not only an eyesore, but also a threat to the community it once served. The school was built of predominantly brick, concrete and wood material.

The imminent threat from the former Venice School is the potential for asbestos and lead exposure to trespassers and nearby residents. Currently there are structural concerns with the exterior walls shifting outward and piers buckling. In several locations the face brick is separating from the masonry back-up and has fallen off.



THE THREAT OF ASBESTOS

Asbestos is a group of naturally occurring minerals that contain indestructible fibers that can occur in several forms. Because of its remarkable fire resistant properties and excellent insulating capabilities, it has been used in thousands of common building materials.

Any level of exposure to asbestos involves some health risk, although the exact degree of risk is difficult to estimate. The relationship between exposure level and health risk is complex. When the fibers enter the air, individuals may be exposed and inhale the fibers. Those fibers retained by the lungs will remain indefinitely.



Illinois
Environmental
Protection Agency

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Exposure to high levels of airborne asbestos is associated with a debilitating lung disease called asbestosis; a rare cancer of the chest and abdominal lining called mesothelioma; and cancers of the lung, esophagus, stomach, colon, and other organs.

Children and young adults who are exposed to asbestos have a greater chance than older adults of developing certain asbestos-related diseases due to a longer remaining lifespan during which disease may develop. Children and young adults are most often those involved in the trespassing and vandalism at the former school, and therefore are at greater risk for exposure.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: USING STATE FUNDS

- ❖ The Illinois EPA has confirmed the presence of various lead and asbestos-containing materials within the building through laboratory analysis.
- ❖ The corrective actions to be completed by State contractor, REACT Environmental Engineers and asbestos abatement contractor, Great Western Abatement, include:
 - 1) Abatement of all asbestos and hazardous containing material;
 - 2) Building removal through recycling of all brick, concrete and metal; and
 - 3) Backfilling of basements and grading of soil where needed.
- ❖ All asbestos material will be disposed of at an asbestos permitted landfill. At the landfill, the material is buried and covered immediately with six inches of compacted soil to prevent further disruption of the material.
- ❖ All work will be done in accordance to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (a Federal regulation under the Clean Air Act), Occupational Safety and Health Association Standards, and Illinois EPA regulations.
- ❖ The cost to dispose of the asbestos contaminated material and recycle the remaining building material is estimated at \$606,729.
- ❖ It is anticipated that work will begin in November and be completed within approximately three months.

The Venice Community Unit School District No. 3 is the current owner of the property. The work to be done by Illinois EPA will enable the City to benefit in the following ways:

- ❖ a physical and environmental threat is removed from the community;
- ❖ property values can increase; and
- ❖ the property can be utilized by the community for the residents of Venice.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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